

DANIEL KENYON'S FORTUNE :: By E. L. Bacon

WHEN Daniel Kenyon, cashier of the Elm City Bank, bought an automobile his neighbors, the Simpsons, who had lived next door to him for twenty-five years, during which time they had been under the impression that they knew all the ins and outs of his private affairs, were surprised and bewildered by the sudden burst of extravagance.

"How the deuce can he do it?" exclaimed Henry Simpson, as he gazed out of the window at the car that was chugging in front of Kenyon's house. "It's not content with a runabout; it's a big touring car. And on twenty-five hundred a year salary! It beats me!"

"He's been working for the bank close to thirty years," suggested Mrs. Simpson. "Don't you suppose he saved something in all that time? Anyway, there's the five thousand his uncle left him. That ought to be enough for an auto."

"You ought to know Dan Kenyon well enough by this time to realize he's not the kind to spend half his fortune for a 'so-machine,'" declared her husband. "I'll bet that car cost his salary at least. And as for saving, you know how much chance he's had to do that. His salary wasn't but two thousand till a few years ago, and his wife had been an invalid for fifteen years when she died, with doctor's bills running up high. Not much chance for big savings there."

"Well, he's surely the last man I'd have suspected of such an extravagance," said Mrs. Simpson. "He's never been the kind to think of luxuries. Why, he's always watched every penny. He must have made a lot of money somehow."

"Small chance of a man in this gossip town getting hold of a lot of money without everybody knowing all about it. Anyway, Kenyon's never been close-mouthed about his affairs. He's never been ashamed to let his friends know about himself. Why, it was only six months ago that I heard him say the five thousand he got from his uncle's estate was pretty near all he had in the world. And he's got the reputation of being as truthful a man as ever lived. So, what in blazes is he doing with a touring-car?"

As he turned from the window, scratching his head in perplexity, his daughter came hurrying into the room. She had just returned from a call on some friends across the street.

"What do you suppose Mr. Kenyon has been doing?" she exclaimed.

"Been buying an auto," said her mother, with a touch of peevishness. "Didn't you suppose we knew that by this time? If he can afford an auto, we ought to be going around in a gold chariot. But I guess your father would have a fainting spell if either of us happened to hint at a horse and buggy."

"He's been getting more than an auto," announced Miss Simpson. "The Beldens are going abroad, and he's rented their house, furniture and all, and the garage in the rear for his machine. Where on earth has he been getting all the money?"

Her mother slumped down in a chair with a gasp, while Simpson stared at his daughter with his mouth hanging open in astonishment.

"Why, that will cost him more than his salary in rent!" he exclaimed.

"And Clara Kenyon's been talking about getting four servants! Four of 'em!" cried Miss Simpson. "And she's been getting the most gorgeous clothes! Her father has surely got rich somehow."

"Well, I'm dinged if I know how he's done it!" declared Simpson, screwing up his face in bewilderment.

"He can't have inherited any more money," nuzzed his wife, "because we know all about the few relatives he ever had, and they've all been dead for years. None of them had much to leave, anyway. He's been speculating; that's what he's been doing."

"Speculating he has!" Simpson had but small respect for his wife's views outside the domain of household affairs, and he glared at her commiseratingly. "I know that he had his five thousand invested in mortgages only six months ago. If he's been able in this short time to pull it out and turn it over so fast that he's rich enough to live like a millionaire he's done what no other man could do."

"He must have got it somewhere," then, where?" demanded Mrs. Simpson.

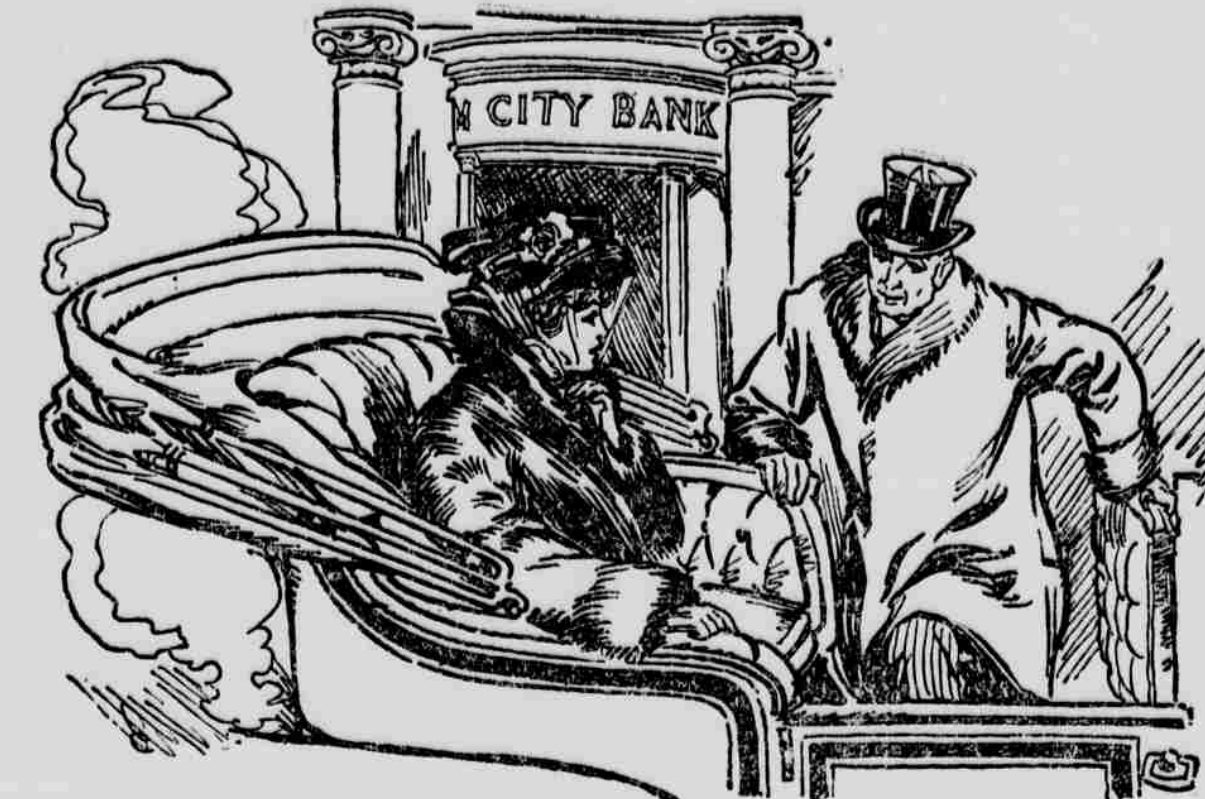
"I don't know," returned Simpson miserably. Then after a moment, a sudden change of expression came over his face, and he added, "I don't know—unless—He turned toward his wife with a curious look in his eyes and said no more."

Days and weeks passed without throwing any light on the riddle of Daniel Kenyon's sudden rise to opulence. On the contrary it grew more and more perplexing.

He and his daughter, a delicate-looking girl of twenty-three or four, moved from their simple home into the big, golden house, where they began living on a scale that was indeed luxurious compared with their former condition. The little, bent, gray man, for whom life had been none too easy, who had always looked shabby and careworn, was already being regarded as one of the chief citizens of the community. People began to speak of him as a millionaire. And he certainly looked the part as he and his daughter, both wrapped in expensive furs, rolled through the streets of the town in their big motor car.

But among all his acquaintances was the constant question: "Where does the money come from?" The Simpsons were as much in the dark as ever on that point. So was everybody else.

As for Kenyon himself, although he had always been frank, outspoken man about his affairs, he never dropped so much as a word that might give a clue to the mystery. Indeed, he was a changed man in that respect; he had suddenly become close-mouthed and taciturn. Money seemed to have chilled his nature. At least, it seemed to have



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brought him no peace of mind, for he looked more careworn than ever. He was not much more than fifty, but it was plain that old age was coming over him very rapidly. New wrinkles had come into his face, and his hair was fast turning white.

His daughter spoke freely to her friends about her father's sudden prosperity, but she never went into the details regarding his affairs.

"No man ever deserved success more than he," she said. "He has worked so hard for so many years, and yet, with everything against him, he has always been so ambitious to get to the top. I was always sure he would win some time. Year after year I've told him so. And he would always say: 'Yes, Clara, I'll win out some time. I don't care about money myself, but I want you to have it—to have all the fine things that money can buy. You're the kind of girl that ought to have them. I don't want to see you dragging through life without them.' He could read me like a book. He knew all my weaknesses. And he knew all the time, no matter how hard I might try to hide it from him, that I hated to be poor. He knew how I chafed under it. How I longed for all the things that more fortunate fathers could give their daughters. I'm a selfish, frivolous girl, I know, and now that all this money has come, and I see how old and worn father looks after having worked so long and so hard to get it, I almost hate myself."

Apparently she had never wondered for a moment where the money had come from. She had no head for business matters, and had only a vague idea of what her father's duties were at the bank. Wealth had come suddenly as the result of long years of hard work; that was all she knew about it, and she was not inquisitive regarding the details of the achievement.

But her lack of curiosity as to how her father had accomplished so much did not extend to his fellow townsmen. For many a week it was the chief topic for gossip among them.

People wondered why Kenyon still stuck to his twenty-five-hundred-dollar job in the bank since his rise in the world. They wondered, too, why such a worried look had come into his face. There were still other things that perplexed them. One was the very evident fact that he was Kenyon himself showing signs of being under a hard strain, but his daughter, too, was beginning to look worn and troubled. In the first flush of prosperity she had not shown it, but now it was rapidly becoming more and more apparent.

She went out less among her friends, and the entertaining that she had begun in her new home gradually came to an end. Before long she was very seldom seen outside of her own door. Her father, too, was becoming silent and demure. Even the motor car lay, day after day, in the garage without being used.

"You can take my word for it," said Henry Simpson to his wife, "there's some kind of trouble brewing for Kenyon. I don't understand what, and neither does anybody else, but it's as plain as day that things are not right. There are a lot of ugly rumors beginning to fly around, but I've always had faith in Dan Kenyon, and I hesitate to take any stock of them. Still, you know I don't look well for a small-salaried bank employee to be blossoming out like a plutocrat. It naturally makes folks suspicious. If Kenyon hadn't always been known as the soul of honesty there'd be even more talk than there is."

It was only a few days later that Augustus Berger, president of the Elm City Bank, was ushered into Simpson's parlor.

"You've known Dan Kenyon for a good many years, Simpson," began Berger.

"Yes, sir, for twenty-five years," replied Simpson.

"What's your idea about this change in his circumstances? It's come to the ears of myself and some of the bank's stockholders that he's going a pretty swift pace for a man on his salary. What does it mean?"

"How should I know?" said Simpson. "He must have got hold of a lot of money somehow, but he's never told me where it came from."

"I've been taking some observations the last few days," said Berger solemnly. "And I've discovered that Kenyon has been living at a rate of at least five times what his salary

amounts to. It would take a fortune of something like two hundred thousand dollars to bring him in enough of an income for that, and it's plain that nobody's been leaving him any such sum. Now, where's all the money coming from? He must have plied for it, or he's got the man who would spend all his income. All his life he has lived well within his means, putting aside a few dollars every month for a rainy day. You might say he's been accumulating, but I have good evidence that he didn't have but a few thousand dollars in the world a few months ago, and it would take a Napoleon of finance to make a big fortune in the stock market in that space of time on such small beginnings. What's more, he can't be speculating very heavily, when he never goes anywhere but to the bank. I've had him watched."

"Well," said Simpson, "it's your affair, not mine. All I can say is that I and everybody that knows him have always had faith in his honesty."

"I'm not saying anything against his honesty," snapped Berger. "I'm just wondering; that's all. I don't believe he's been robbing the bank, or we've been having the books gone over, and they're straight. He couldn't fool the examiners. His accounts aren't short a dollar."

"If I were you I'd ask him," suggested Simpson. "That's the simplest way."

"That's just what I've done," said Berger. "And he told me it was his own affair, and that as long as his accounts at the bank were correct, he ought to be satisfied. Said I wouldn't believe him even if he did tell me. Now, I've always liked Kenyon. He's a good cashier, and I'd hate to lose him. All this gossip isn't good for the bank. What's more, even if I have faith in him myself, some of the stockholders are in a mighty suspicious frame of mind in spite of what the books show."

Berger continued for weeks to pry into his cashier's private affairs, although he gained very little enlightenment from the effort. But one thing his detective found out was that Kenyon's daughter had become alarmingly ill.

That didn't seem to have any bearing upon the mystery of her father's opulence, but it might account, perhaps, for the rapid change that had come over him for his haggard features, his heavy eyes, and his constant expression of anxiety and dread.

"His case is hopeless," he told some inquiring friends. "The disease has been developing steadily for a long time. She may linger on for weeks—perhaps months—but the specialists tell me it's incurable."

It was almost a year from the time that Kenyon had started his neighbors by moving into his new home that his daughter died. And it was only a few hours before she passed away that he received notice that the bank would require his services no longer. The protests of the stockholders had grown too strong for Berger to withstand.

The day after the funeral Kenyon walked into Berger's office at the bank. In one luxurious year he had become an old man, white-haired, emaciated, infirm, and the heavy, deep-set eyes that regarded Berger peered out from a face white and drawn.

"Mr. Berger, I've come to set myself right here. I don't care whether I have to give up my place or not. I've passed the point where anything matters one way or the other. But I've been under suspicion here, and as an honest man I want to keep my reputation clean."

"You've been wondering where I got the money to live as I've been doing the last year. I'm going to tell you. A year ago I had five thousand dollars, inherited from an uncle. I had three thousand dollars I had saved—the savings of thirty years—thirty, long, hard years of grind. There wasn't a year when I didn't save a little, even when I was getting only twelve dollars a week. The made eight thousand dollars. Mr. Berger, and I raised a little more on my life-insurance. I got a few hundred more by selling some jewelry my grandmother left, and a little more by running into debt. And besides that, I had my salary. That gave me enough to live as I've been doing. I'll show you my private accounts if you're not satisfied."

"You mean to say that was all you had—and that you spent it?" Berger was gaping up at him in amazement.

"That was all I had," said Kenyon, "and I spent it—spent every dollar of it."

"But—I don't understand why you should have done that," stammered Berger.

"Perhaps you never will understand, Mr. Berger—unless you know what it means to be told you've got to lose the only person in the world you care about. A year ago the doctors found that my daughter had an incurable disease. It hadn't developed then enough to affect her much, but they knew nothing would loosen its grip on her. They told me she might live a year at the very longest. So I made up my mind that she'd be dead for her last year—and I've done it. My daughter had always had unbounded faith in my ability to climb to the top. She'd always looked forward to a time when I would be rich and when we should have the luxuries of life, without having to watch the pennies all the time. You'll get there some time, father; she would say, and I could see how that ambition had got hold of her and worked itself into her life till it was her constant thought and hope."

"So, when the doctors told me she couldn't live more than a year, I said to myself, 'She'll have her ambition realized, anyway.'"

"It wasn't so much the luxuries she wanted after all. It was to see her faith in me justified. It was to see the other day that she said, 'Father, I don't care so much what happens to me now that you've got up to the top.'"

"That's how it was, Mr. Berger—and it was worth it."



FOOD FOR SKEPTICS :: By JOHN BARTON OXFORD

JUST as the first gray streaks in the sky to the east were heralding the approach of day, the weird, nerve-racking walls, which had sounded intermittently since midnight from the branches of a maple close to the bedroom windows, began again.

Scarcely had the first melancholy note shattered the frosty stillness when the back door was opened cautiously, and down the steps came Captain Solomon Beale, the collar of his hastily donned overcoat turned up about his neck and his bare feet thrust into a pair of well-worn carpet slippers.

In one hand he bore a stout gunny-sack; in the other was a saucer of cream, which he balanced gingerly as he tiptoed to the foot of the maple. High up in the branches above his head, a furry chon ball, crouched on one of the spreading limbs, showed him the position of the enemy.

The captain's lips set in grim determination. He held out the saucer of cream in enticing fashion, the while he strove to work something like blandishment into a voice of unusual gruffness.

"Come, kitty, come!" he coaxed, but the black ball above him, possessed, seemingly, of some inkling as to the true inwardness of the captain's sudden hospitality, refused to venture from its retreat. A pair of green eyes stared down at him, as if already they more than half suspected the treachery he was planning.

Captain Beale put down the saucer at the foot of the tree and moved away a few paces. There was a light movement of the branches, the sound of outspread claws upon the bark, and down the trunk came the cat, sniffed suspiciously the contents of the saucer, and then began to lick the cream with a relish that was most apparent.

The grim expression upon Captain Beale's face became more pronounced.

He took one cautious step forward, and then another. Engraged in the least before it, the cat paid not the least attention to the stealthy approach. It was only when the captain was close beside it, that it condescended to turn its attention from the cream, and then it was too late; for the captain, with an agility surprising in a man of his years, suddenly leaped forward and caught the black body by the nape of the neck.

Vainly did the cat give vent to its outraged feelings; vainly did it struggle to effectively use its teeth and claws. In a trice the captain had thrust it into the gunny-sack, the neck of which he tied with a piece of stout twine.

Panting, but triumphant, he laid the wriggling bundle, from which came the sounds of a lost soul in the deepest woe, upon the ground. He turned to cast a hurried and guilty glance at the windows of the house next door, half expecting to find there numerous protesting witnesses to his perfidy; but the windows of the house next door remained discreetly curtained. Thinking his lucky stars for this deliverance of his enemy into his hands, Captain Beale picked up the sack, bore it into the house, and went upstairs to array himself somewhat more fully.

It was only too obvious that a man, bearing a bundle of such liveliness as the sack bade fair to be, could never hope to go through the village streets in broad daylight without attracting unpleasant attention to himself. Therefore, as soon as the captain had completed a hurried toilet, he came into the kitchen, took up the sack, and while yet the town was wrapped in slumber, made his way to the water-front, where his schooner, a little craft of some hundred tons, lay at the dock, her cargo of potatoes aboard, all ready to sail with the morning tide.

But even in the half-light of early

morning the captain was not without a certain breathless anxiety as he hurried along the silent, deserted streets, the gunny-sack over his shoulder and the cat within it sending out soulful protests every step of the way.

Indeed, it was only when he gained the dock, scrambled aboard the Lucinda, and tossed his burden unceremoniously into the spare stateroom of the little cabin, that he found courage to draw a long breath.

"There, that's all," he apostrophized the sack, "squall your insides out now for all I care or for all the good it will do ye! I'll learn ye to come sneakin' round that maple by my bedroom every night I try to stay ashore. I keepin' me awake with your infernal yowling. Go on; keep it up now; don't mind me! Have your fun while you can. I'll have you overboard now, if it wasn't for the tide takin' you ashore and them Rider folks next door gettin' suspicious that I drowned ye. I'll just keep ye trussed up in the bag till we get outside, and then over you go like the worthless carcass you are. I guess likely next time I stay ashore here in my own house I'll get a little more peace, so far as you are concerned, anyway."

He slammed the door of the spare stateroom, crossed the cabin, and threw himself into his own berth to snatch what sleep he might before it was time to start for Rockville with the cargo.

He was awakened somewhat later by the sound of heavy footsteps on the deck over his head. He arose and went up the companionway to find his two foremost hands, and Joe Blair, his cook, but just come aboard.

"All right, boys," he greeted them cordially. "Glad you got here bright and early. May as well get under way right off. Tide's settin' jest right for us now. Git breakfast goin', Joe. Look alive there, for'ard. Cast off them lines."

In a few moments the Lucinda was drifting with the tide away from the dock, and presently, with all sail set, she went careening across the bay toward the open sea.

It was after he had eaten one of Joe Blair's excellent breakfasts that Captain Beale's mind returned to the spare stateroom and the sack therein. He arose from the table, and thrusting his head out of the companionway, mentally noted the schooner's position. Far away the shore was but a hazy blue line, while just over the top low loomed the gray shaft of the lighthouse on Flat Island. The captain chuckled.

"This is as good as any place," he told himself. "The tide'll never wash it ashore from here."

He descended to the cabin, opened the stateroom-door and drew out the sack. With much vocal effort, the unwilling tenant had well-nigh exhausted itself, but as the bag was sent up last wall that would have killed the last spark of pity in the captain's heart, had such a spark existed.

As it was, he stolidly carried the bag to the deck, and looked about for a convenient piece of scrap-iron to serve as sinker-weight.

He was intent on his task of securely lashing a piece of spare chain to the neck of the bag when Joe Blair, with a basket of dirty dishes on his arm, came up from the cabin. He spied the captain seated on the bits forward and made his way thither.

"What you goin' to do with that, cap'n?" he demanded.

Captain Beale went on with his work without so much as looking up.

"I'm goin' to heave this bag over," said he.

"So? What yer got in the bag?"

The contents of the bag answered for itself. There came from its depth a wall of misery that would have melted the heart of an idol. Joe Blair started perceptibly. He set down the basket of dishes and looked accusingly at his superior.

"It's a cat," he said.

Captain Beale blushed. Hard lines appeared about the corners of his mouth.

"Well, what of that?" said he.

"What you goin' to do with that cat?" the cook questioned in a tone that boded trouble.

"Do with it?" the captain snapped. "What do you s'pose. D'yer think I was goin' to let it for a figger-head? I'm goin' to do jest what I told yer I was—heave it overboard."

Joe Blair's brow darkened. He pushed back his soiled cap and scratched his head in doubtful fashion. It was plain he wanted to speak his mind, and yet felt some hesitancy in doing so. He started from foot to foot, and looked helplessly at the basket of dishes at his feet.

"Say," he ventured at length, "say, I ain't exactly what you'd call a superstitious man, which ain't sayin', neither, that I ain't got my peculiarities. But I was on a vessel once—the old Starlight, bound for Maracaibo, it was—and they had a cat aboard that took sick, and they heave it overboard; and after that—"

"Yes, yes, I know," the captain interrupted irritably. "You've told me about that once or twice before. There ain't nothin' like that goin' to happen this time. This ain't the ship's cat. It's one I fetched aboard a purpose to drown."

"It don't make no difference," the cook maintained doggedly. "It's bad

luck to heave a cat over, no matter where it came from, nor how it got aboard. Say, what color is it?"

"Black," said the captain with incautious truth.

Joe Blair fairly gasped. "Black!" he cried. "Say, you don't mean you'd heave a black cat overboard, do ye?"

"I ain't so terrible partial as to colors," was the captain's sardonic response.

"Don't you go to heavin' no black cats off'n this schooner!" the cook said in a shaking voice.

Beale stiffened. "Se here, you blasted grease-skimmer," he belittled. "I'm cap'n of this craft. You want to remember that. I shall most probably do about as I'm mind to, and that blasted cat is goin' over—see?"

"If she does," the cook threatened. "I'll git out of this schooner—see? I don't. I'll git out of her as soon as we get to Rockville—if we ever do," he ended gloomily.

The threat struck Captain Beale in a vulnerable spot. The one boast of his otherwise modest nature was of the superiority of his cook. All too well he remembered the galleys regime when Joe Blair had shipped without him. All too well he pictured the soggy biscuits and the greasy hash of Joe's predecessor. What mattered the cat's presence for a few days, anyway? He could manage to take the pest ashore when they arrived at Rockville and lose it somewhere. The main thing was to get rid of it. Where or how were secondary considerations. Therefore Captain Beale unbent.

"Well, if you're so terribly touchy about it, take the critter into the galley, then," he commanded, "and keep her there out of her as soon as we get to Rockville."

"I tell ye I ain't what you'd call a superstitious man," the cook retorted, "but you'd got into some kind of a scrape if you'd drowned her."

He picked up the sack and slouched off toward the galley. Captain Beale, with a grunt of disgust, as much for his own weakness as for the cook's, stalked at to the wheel.

It was ideal weather that followed them that trip. The wind held fair and brisk; the fogs, usually prevalent in those waters in the early spring, were conspicuous only by their absence. In the galley Joe Blair made friends with the cat and fed it upon the best the lockers afforded.

"Havin' a good run of it this trip, ain't we, cap'n?" he observed to Beale the third day out, with a grin that angered the captain.

"Couldn't be better as I see," the skipper replied.

"Know what makes it?" the cook questioned, with a meaning jerk of his head. "It's the cat."

Nor was it only the propitious

weather that Joe Blair ascribed to the cat's presence. When they discovered the old leak, that had caused them more or less trouble the last trip, had stopped, it was the cat—according to Joe. Nothing but the cat saved one of the foremost hands from serious injury when he fell from aloft, and, by something in the nature of a miracle, landed unhurt upon his feet on the deck. Again it was the cat that steered them into a school of pollock, and brought the cook the luck of landing some hundred and fifty pounds of them as he trotted a line astern.

Day by day the cat's benign influence grew apace; and day by day Captain Beale waxed more wrath and disgusted.

"Say, after the luck we've had this trip, I dunno as I should want to go to sea again in this schooner, if the cat wasn't aboard," the cook confessed, and the remark set Captain Beale to thinking and planning.

Plainly the cat was becoming all too popular. She bade fair to be a permanent fixture unless something was done to shadow her with disaster. Somehow or other suspicion must be brought to rest on her. Captain Beale meditated long and deeply.

"I don't want to lose such a cook, and I'll be eternally cursed if I'll have a cat aboard," he ruminated. "I guess likely the best way out of it is to have something unlucky happen while she's aboard. Somethin' unlucky, that's the ticket," he repeated with a chuckle, a plan already beginning to unfold itself to his mind.

Long that evening Captain Beale sat before the little table in the cabin, figuring laboriously.

"She's got to go on the ways before long and have some new plank in her bottom, anyway," he mused, the while a smile of satisfaction wreathed his homely face. He consulted an almanac at his elbow. "Now, if she was to hit Shovel Rip Ledge to-morrow, say about six in the evening, the water she'd about to hang there till high tide, long about nine, and maybe, pound out a plank or two. She might jest as well go on the ways this trip as any. That's the ticket; let her pound out a couple of plank while she's hangin' on the ledge—long enough to git her leakin' so's all hands would be obliged to hang there to work the pumps for dear life the rest of the way to Rockville, and then let's see what becomes of that cursed cat's reputation. I'll bet they'll heave her over themselves."

To add the captain in his plan, the next afternoon a gray mist began to rise from the sea. Steadily it thickened, until by five o'clock it was an impenetrable pall. In the bow the fog-horn in the hands of the lookout boomed and bar-r-r-ed in monotonous fashion, sending out its hollow wail

through the dun-colored walls that had closed about them. Captain Beale glanced into the binnacle, headed the schooner a point farther to the southward, and grinned.

Presently by the bits he could see the lookout straining his ears between the blasts of the horn, evidently listening intently. Evidently the captain knew to what he was listening; for already through the mist he could hear the distant moan of the whistling-buoy, which marks the outer edge of Shovel Rip Ledge.

The sound grew steadily plainer. Captain Beale's grin widened. At last the lookout hailed:

"Whistlin'-buoy dead ahead, sir!"

The skipper made a great pretense of listening. "I don't hear it," he declared, and held his course. The lookout seemed a trifle uneasy. In a moment he was hailing once more: "The whistlin'-buoy dead ahead, sir. Whistlin'-buoy dead ahead."

Captain Beale affected a fine scorn. "I don't hear no whistlin'-buoy," he maintained, "but I can hear some old freighter groanin' off there."

The lookout's next hail, which followed almost immediately, was a wild yell, while he tore aft at his best speed.

"Breakers, sir, right under her bow!" he howled. And then the schooner struck.

There was a shock, a jolt, a grinding sound. The little craft shivered from stem to stern. Up the galley companionway came tumbling the cook.

"Lord help us!" he yelled as the familiar groan of the whistling-buoy smote his ears from close quarters. "We've hit Shovel Rip Ledge!"

There was another bump—a series of bumps; the schooner stopped, surged ahead, then stopped again. Then the grinding beneath her keel began once more; slowly she forged ahead. They could plainly hear the surge under her bows.

"Judas Priest!" shouted the amazed skipper. "What do you make of that? Dummied if we wasn't hit Shovel Rip Ledge, and gone clean over it! Start the pumps, quick!"

In a trice the pumps were shrieking their protests.

"How much water's she takin'?" the skipper demanded.

"Not a drop, sir," the men at the pumps answered.

Captain Beale wiped his forehead. For a time he stood staring stupidly at the binnacle before he put the schooner back on her course.

Then the cook came running aft with a black, furry body in his arms.

"Say, will you believe it now?" he shouted. "Ain't there somethin' in it? Would you ever get off'n that ledge; much more gone over it, if it hadn't been for the cat? Ain't it a special providence you fetched her? I'll tell ye one thing, I ain't goin' to sea again in this schooner, nor no other, without a black cat aboard."

The skipper burst into a great roar of laughter, which left the cook staring at him in open-mouthed wonder.

"You win," said Captain Beale, when he had somewhat recovered his breath. "I'm most beginnin' to think myself there's somethin' in it. That cat stays aboard."

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